



## A Note from the Pastor's Corner

This month will be a bit different from my usual "Pastor's Corner". Instead of going in-depth on one issue, I'll hit a couple of topics. The first one is about my recent move. And I'll tell you that I sincerely hope this is my very last move. Ever. As you probably know, our moving day had to be pushed to May 25<sup>th</sup>, the day after Easter.

Now that I'm living in Fayetteville, some things will be different for me, but not a lot. First, I'll switch my day off from Monday to Friday. There are two evenings a week that I have meetings here in Central Square, so it only makes sense to me to be here on Mondays on a regular basis. And since I have no evening meetings on Friday, that makes it a prime candidate for my 'day off' day.

In the past, I had been devoting a couple of hours a day reading, writing, and in other ways studying and preparing for Sundays. This work was done in the parsonage where I could have a span of uninterrupted time that I could devote to those tasks. I will still commit that time, but instead of a couple hours a day, it will be all day Wednesday. That could vary from week-to-week, depending on other events. For example, our Church Councils are on Wednesday evenings. So it would only make sense for me to be in Central Square on Wednesday those weeks and have my study day be a different day.

Some have asked me why Tanya and I moved. Instead of using this space to repeat what prompted our decision, please refer to the January edition of the Witness. You can find it at our web site, [www.fbc-cs.com](http://www.fbc-cs.com).

If you've been worshipping with us anytime during the last two months, you would be aware that we will have our Bring-a-Friend Sunday on May 15<sup>th</sup>. And as has been pointed out in several different ways, this is *not* same as 'asking' a friend to come to church with you. I bring this up because I still hear people referring to it as 'invite-a-friend' Sunday.

What's the difference? Simply asking someone to worship with us makes it too easy for the one being asked to say "no" and for the one doing the asking to have no commitment or involvement. Simply inviting someone doesn't really require much of a personal relationship with the one being asked, and it can be done quite casually.

But, committing to bring someone with you is a different kettle of fish. By implication, there has already been a level of trust established between the ask-er and the ask-ee. The one being asked then gets the message that their friend truly cares about them, in a level much deeper and more important than simply knowing if they take cream or sugar in their coffee.

The other question I had been asked is why should we be making such a big deal of this? Why can't every Sunday be Bring-a-Friend Sunday? I'll take a shot at the second part of this question first. Not only *can* every Sunday be Bring-a-Friend Sunday, every Sunday *should* be of the Bring-a-Friend variety. But as you can plainly see, it is not.

So, why make 'such a big deal' about it? Well, for many people, this requires a sizable shift in thinking and attitude. One of those attitudes is that "it's the preacher's job". Another is that "people know where we are – they'll come when they need us". And a third is "we just need to keep doing the same thing we've always done only work harder at it".

These attitudes are prevalent throughout the established church in the US. One of the results of sticking with those attitudes has, along with other factors, gotten the church into the crisis it now finds itself. We can't go in-depth, but here are but a few reasons those attitudes work against the church.

Far and away, the number one reason a person decides to visit a church is because a friend asked them. The lowest ranking reason is because a clergy person asked them to come. Even more, each church is a local church – local meaning local people are the members. Pastors come and pastors go, as we've all heard it said. Simply knowing where our building is located is no more a motivation to attend a church than knowing where park, a restaurant, or a fishing hole is located motivates a person to go to those places.

As was noted in past articles, continuing to do the same thing only working harder at it not only continues down a path that has not been working, but also puts all our faith in ourselves and our own efforts. We know what we've been doing and how we've been doing it – meaning we really don't need any inspiration from and put no trust (faith) in the Holy Spirit. No matter what phrases we use (we have faith that God will bless what we do, e.g.), God is left out of the equation when we limit what we do to what we know (meaning our faith [trust] is in our own abilities).

So all I ask is that you take a step in the direction of faith. And right now, that will be faith (trust) that God will give you the courage and motivation to bring your good friends with you on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Grace and peace, Pastor Bud